

11 May 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, FI/ROM

FROM : EX/RR

SUBJECT : Proposed Agency Position on Downgrading of  
CO/COCOM/CHINCOM Documents

1. The U.S. Delegation on the Coordinating Committee (COCOM) at Paris, under instructions from the Department of State, has approved the new COCOM security system which became effective 4 April 1955 (refs: COCOM Documents 1901 and 1902). The United States, in its acceptance of this system, has concurred in the principle of downgrading from SECRET to CONFIDENTIAL of CO/COCOM/CHINCOM documents. The Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce, and FOA/NDAC have already indicated their concurrence in outgoing State instructions.

2. The UNDEL in Paris POLTO 861 of 11 November 1954 suggested that the Economic Defense Intelligence Committee (EDIC) examine from the intelligence standpoint this proposed downgrading of C/C/C documents. It was recognized in Washington, however, that EDIC could not undertake this assignment since each individual agency was obliged to discharge this responsibility under its own regulations and within its own area of competence. With a view toward establishing a CIA position in this matter, Chief, Coordination Area, ORR directed [redacted] of this Office to review the more than 3,000 documents involved and to make recommendations thereon to higher Agency authority.

3. The documents in question do not permit determination of the source of the information contained therein. Insofar as they contain CIA information, this has come principally from the Economic Defense Division (D/E/RR) support of the several agencies concerned with economic defense. D/E, in turn, has derived its information from various sources, including [redacted] Whenever information from these documents has been released for use in COCOM, approval for release has always been obtained from the appropriate CIA office.

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4. In order to categorize these documents, [REDACTED] adopted the following criteria to determine selection of documents as either SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL:

A. Such documents are considered to incorporate intelligence of SECRET classification if they include information on: Soviet bloc demand/supply position in specific goods and services; strategic significance of specific goods or services as applicable to Soviet needs; clandestine, illegal or unreported trade in strategic commodities with the Soviet bloc; application of specific commodities to military or atomic energy uses; intelligence sources and methods, and application, particularly with respect to specific problems in the export control field; and, gaps in intelligence on the Soviet bloc.

B. Such documents are considered to incorporate intelligence of not higher than CONFIDENTIAL classification when they are concerned solely or principally with: commodity definitions and quota determinations; general expressions of Participating Country attitudes on various control problems and review of control systems; statistics on trade in specific commodities which provide only information on quantity, volume and unit measurements; and, procedural and administrative matters.

5. It was possible to isolate certain classes of documents as clearly of no intelligence importance. On these, OHR recommended to the Agency Classification Officer that CIA interpose no objection to their downgrading, and this position was communicated to the Chairman of the EOAC Executive Committee in memorandum of 9 March 1955.

6. It has been necessary to review the remaining documents individually.

7. This Office proposes to recommend to the Agency Classification Officer that he inform the Chairman, EOAC Executive Committee, by letter, that CIA interposes no objection to the downgrading from SECRET to CONFIDENTIAL of the documents itemized in the lists of CO/COCON/CHINCON documents, reports, and papers transmitted on 26 April 1955 from UNDEL (J. M. Myerson) to EGD/ITR/State, except for those documents (listed individually by number in the Agency Classification Officer's letter) that, as a result of [REDACTED] survey, 25X1A9a are considered to fall in Category A of Para. 4, above, or that were unavailable to [REDACTED] for examination. 25X1A9a

8. If you have no objection to this action insofar as FI Staff is concerned, would you so indicate on the concurrence line below.

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Concurrence

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FI Staff

D/E/RE:JAG:22 (11 May 1955)

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